

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

STRUGGLES OF THE NATIONS, or The Principal Wars, Battles, Sieges and Treaties of the World, by S. M. Burnham. In two volumes. \$20. pp. 848. (Charles T. Dillingham.)

A great deal of labor has been expended upon these volumes, and it must be presumed that the writer had some definite idea in compiling them. But it is difficult to determine the place of such a work and perhaps even more difficult to perceive its utility. Broadly speaking, it is a partial attempt at universal history, proportioned upon a scale which may be judge of from the fact that nearly the whole of one volume is devoted to the battles and wars of the United States, while the other volume is supposed to recount the battles and wars of all the rest of the world, from the dawn of history down to the present day. After this, it need hardly be said that the propositions adopted by the author are, to say the least, eccentric, and that as an aid to the student a work so constituted cannot be of high value. Mr. Burnham, moreover, never cites his authorities, and a cursory glance at his pages will show that he used no discrimination in selecting them. Thus, in writing of the origins of the older nations, he mixes up the boldest myths with the ascertained facts of history in the most reckless way. This, however, is comparatively a slight matter, for it may be said that the author does not pretend to be writing serious history, but only to be making a collection of battles, wars, and sieges. As for the treatises, the promise of the title-page is distinctly misleading, for Mr. Burnham does not give any treaty in full, and as a rule presents merely the briefest and most imperfect sketches—not abstracts—of them. He gives perhaps a dozen lines to the more important treaties, and dismisses others with a couple of sentences. At other times he offers samples, as it were, saying "the following are some of the provisions"—and leaving his reader to guess what the other provisions are, or to go elsewhere for information.

We wish the author had, in the preface or introduction, which are, strangely enough, printed in both volumes of the work, undertaken to inform the world to what precise end his curious enterprise was intended. As a book of reference it is altogether without value, because no references are given in it, and also because it is clear that the writer has not the knowledge necessary to adequate discrimination between good, doubtful and bad authorities. A more conspicuous example of unscientific methods in history writing it would indeed be difficult to find, and if the bulky compilation is untrustworthy as regards matters of fact, it cannot be said to possess any compensating literary qualities. Mr. Burnham has doubtless labored conscientiously upon it, but all he has produced is a dry and pitiless paraphrase and condensation. He has no gift of style or of narrative. He has no consciousness of the infinite difficulties which beset the scientific historian. To him whatever has been alleged by anybody about anything is acceptable, and he proceeds proudly setting down the true and the false by jowl, his practice of suppressing his authorities rendering this method peculiarly easy.

We really cannot see why any one should desire to read this book or add it to his library. It does not offer the least attraction from a purely literary point of view, and regarded from the historical point of view, it has no reason for existence. Every critic is accustomed to the melancholy eccentricities of worthy people who will write useless books upon all manner of subjects, but as a rule, these examples of misspent energy are confined to one volume and are more or less modest in scope. It is seldom that one encounters a case like this when a subject has been chosen which might have occupied a historian like Burke some twenty years. But the kind of book-making here exemplified must always end in the same way. The foible, lazy and fastidious public can hardly be persuaded to read the best books even now. How then shall they be brought to tolerate the dull and unnecessary ones? It is, indeed, impossible not to regret the waste of time and the disappointment of perhaps high expectations involved in such fictions, but the fact that they are fictions cannot be overlooked and must be plainly stated.

SOLUCION DE LA FELICIDAD Y DICHA UNIVERSAL. Por Simón Masanet. Se dice en su libro: "Camino de la Felicidad." Napoleon Thompson & Co.

The author of this book is a man of strong convictions. He firmly believes that "the Solution of Universal Happiness" can be reached only through an absolute change in the present system of education. He passes in review the various philosophies which have prevailed from the beginning of the world. With strong leanings toward the Christian philosophy, as expounded by the Saviour in the spiritual field, he complains of its perversion by those who have attributed to them the task of preaching it. He believes in democracy as the true foundation of government, and exalts Washington and Lincoln as practical exponents of its doctrines, but regrets at the same time the shams and eccentricities which are committed under its mantle. Senior Masanet attributes the perversion of the Christian and democratic philosophies to the accepted system of educating the youth, and he strongly urges an absolute modification of that system. In his book the author indicates the principal vices to be remedied, as well as the principal features of the system he advocates. But in order to secure the best possible results, Senior Masanet, who is a man of wealth and as solicitous for the happiness of the human family as a father is for that of his children, offers the sum of \$3,000 in premiums for a manual or compendium based upon the ethics of his work, which might serve as a textbook in educational establishments. His work gives the general plan for such a manual, and the contest is open until July, 1892, with the following prizes: For the best English method, \$1,000; second, \$600; third, 100 copies of the author's work and 100 copies of the method, which will be printed at Mr. Masanet's cost.

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